

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 216857
ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-08 COME-00 OPIC-03 L-03
/030 R

DRAFTED BY AF/C:RIMARCUS:LAR
APPROVED BY AF/C:WLSWING
-----112777 260443Z /21
R 252002Z AUG 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: ECEM, BDIS, GB

SUBJECT: GABOREN FERTILIZER PLANT

REFS: A) LIBREVILLE 2296; B) STATE 84519

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: DEPTOFF RELAYED GOG UNHAPPINESS RE FERTILIZER PLANT TO JOHN EVANS, N-REN GENERAL COUNSEL. EVANS SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS MATTER WITH N-REN SUBSIDIARY, N-REN INTERNATIONAL LOCATED IN BRUSSELS. LATTER FIRM IS ENTIRELY RESPONSIBLE FOR INVOLVEMENT IN GABON AND IS APPROPRIATE POINT OF CONTACT FOR GOG. END SUMMARY.
 2. ACCORDING TO EVANS, N-REN HAS NOT BEEN IN TOUCH WITH GABONESE BECAUSE IT WAS COMPANY'S UNDERSTANDING THAT GOG WISHED TO DEAL ONLY WITH AUSTRIANS - VOEST AND AUSTRIAN KONTROLBANK REGARDING FUTURE OF FERTILIZER PLANT.
 3. DEPTOFF REMINDED EVANS OF HIS EARLIER PROMISE TO CONTACT THE GABONESE AFTER REVIEWING GOG DIPLOMATIC NOTE.
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DEPTOFF REITERATED GIST OF MINISTER OF MINES DESIRE FOR DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH N-REN AND HIS HOPE THAT ACCOMMODATION COULD BE REACHED. EVANS ADMITTED HE HAD FAILED TO FOLLOW UP ON APRIL CONVERSATION (REF B) BUT SAID HE WOULD SEND IMMEDIATE CABLE TO TOM SNYDER, PRESIDENT OF N-REN

INTERNATIONAL, RECOMMENDING THAT HE (SNYDER) RESUME DIA-

LOGUE WITH THE GABONESE.

4. SINCE LAST MARCH, N-REN HAS BEEN NEGOTIATING WITH ELF CONCERNING PURCHASE OF NATURAL GAS FOR PLANT. QUESTION OF ELF-SUPPLIED GAS WAS ONE OF PRINCIPAL BONES OF CONTENTION IN N-REN'S RATHER SHAKY PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FRENCH OIL FIRM. N-REN HAS ALSO BEEN DISCUSSING NATURE OF PROJECT WITH VOEST AND KONTROLBANK. AUSTRIANS ARE THINKING OF EXPANDING PROJECT TO MAKE FERTILIZER PLANT PART OF LARGER INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX TO INCLUDE MANUFACTURE OF MORE SOPHISTICATED AMMONIA PRODUCTS AND IRON ORE PELLETIZING PLANT AS WELL. IN THIS CONTEXT, DEPT WOULD APPRECIATE ANY ADDITIONAL DETAILS EMBASSY CAN FURNISH ON AUSTRIAN INVOLVEMENT, IN GABOREN. POSSIBILITY REMAINS THAT N-REN MAY STILL DECIDE TO SELL ITS SHARES IN GABOREN TO VOEST (REF B PARA 4).

5. COMMENT: IN VIEW OF EVANS' PREVIOUS INACTION, IT NOT CERTAIN THAT N-REN EAGER TO CONTINUE ASSOCIATION WITH GABOREN. EVANS REMAINS BAFFLED BY BONGO'S DECISION TO SUSPEND CONSTRUCTION ON PLANT. NEVERTHELESS, HE PROMISED TO SEND TO DEPT COPY OF TELEX TO SNYDER, TEXT OF WHICH MAY GIVE BETTER INDICATION OF COMPANY'S INTENTIONS. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FERTILIZERS, INDUSTRIAL PLANTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE216857
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RIMARCUS:LAR
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780349-0664
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780822/aaaaasep.tel
Line Count: 85
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3b4a755b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 LIBREVILLE 2296, 78 STATE 84519
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1617282
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GABOREN FERTILIZER PLANT
TAGS: ECEM, BDIS, GB
To: LIBREVILLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3b4a755b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014